

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 AF-06 IO-11 OPIC-03 SAM-01

OMB-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0569

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: ANGOLA QUESTON PUT OFF

REF: LISBON 0466 DTG 221312Z JAN 76

SUMMARY: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, MEETING JAN 26-27, PUT OFF
DISCUSSION OF ANGOLA UNTIL RETURN OF FONMIN MELO ANTUNES.
SCHEDULING OF ANGOLA ON REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AGENDA IS
REFLECTION OF INCREASING PRESSURE FOR MPLA RECOGNITION IN
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GOVERNMENT AS SITUATION OF ANTI-MPLA FORCES DETERIORATE IN

ANGOLA. NEVERTHELSS, THERE IS DEEP AND WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION. END SUMMARY.

1. REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL: FOLLOWING JAN 26 - 27 MEETING, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) ANNOUNCED IT HAD:

-- BEEN BRIEFED ON PROGRESS OF AFM-PARTIES PACT NEGOTIATIONS;

-- BEEN BRIEFED ON SITUATION OF NOV 25 DETAINEES;

-- EXAMINED POLITICAL SITUATION AND POTENTIAL RAMIFICATIONS OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS;

-- STUDIED SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION AND RECOMMENDED TO GOVERNMENT RAPID ACTION ON SALARY AND INCOME MEASURES;

-- ANALYZED SITUATION OF PORTUGUESE RESIDENTS IN FORMER COLONIES.

IN PRE-MEETING REMARKS TO JOURNALISTS, RC SPOKESMAN CPT SOUSA E CASTRO SAID QUESTION OF ANGOLA HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN INCLUDED ON RC AGENDA, BUT WAS POSTPONED UNTIL SPECIAL MEETING LATER THIS WEEK AFTER FONMIN MELO ANTUNES RETURNS FROM OFFICIAL VISIT TO BELGIUM.

2. ELECTORAL CALENDAR: MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION CDR ALMEIDA E COSTA CONSULTED WITH POLITICAL PARTIES JAN 26 ON ELECTORAL CALENDAR. SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT PS FAVORS HOLDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS PRIOR TO, OR SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS BECAUSE MAJOR PARTIES WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO AGREE ON SINGLE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN WAKE OF HEATED ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN. POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) FAVORS HOLDING ELECTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND PRESIDENCY SIMULTANEOUSLY IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH ELECTED GOVERNMENT AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE, AND IN ORDER TO CAPITALIZE ON MAXIMUM VOTER TURNOUT. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS) PROPOSED THAT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS PRECEDE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BY AT LEAST THREE MONTHS IN ORDER TO DEPERSONALIZE ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN. FELLOW-TRAVELING PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDP) FAVORS HOLDING ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS FIRST FOLLOWED BY PRESIDENTIAL AND THEN LOCAL ELECTIONS.

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3. PACT NEGOTIATIONS; REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIALIST PARTY AND REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MET JAN 25 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON REVISION OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT - PARTIES PACT (REFTEL). POST-MEETING COMMENTS WERE UPBEAT. SOCIALIST MARIO SOTTOMAYOR CARDIA TERMED TALKS "EXTREMELY PRODUCTIVE," WHILE NEGOTIATING PARTNER FRANCISCO SALGADO ZENHA INDICATED FUTURE SOCIALIST-RC DISCUSSIONS MIGHT BE UNNECESSARY. RC SPOKESMAN FONMIN

ERNESTO MELO ANTUNES STATED "UNDERSTANDING" WITH SOCIALISTS HAD BEEN REACHED AND ANNOUNCED RC COMMITTEE WOULD MEET JAN 29 WITH POPULAR DEMOCRATS. ARMED FORCES CHIEFS IN JAN 26 MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN SAID THEY HAD BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH TO LET THIS ISSUE GO AWRY. THEY WERE CONFIDENT THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED.

4. CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORM USE LIMED: IN ANOTHER SIGN OF THE TIMES, LISBON MILITARY REGION COMMANDER BG VASCO LOURENCO EXPRESSED HIS DETERMINATION JAN 26 TO ENFORCE A PREVIOUS DIRECTIVE BY ARMY CIEF OF STAFF ANTONIO RAMALHO EANES LIMITING USE OF CAMOUFLAGED FATIGUES TO STRICTLY SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS TRAINING EXERCISES. JUNGLE UNIFORM, A HERITAGE OF THE AFRICAN WARS, HAD BEEN SPORTED BY VIRTUALLY ALL OPERATIONAL UNITS IN PORTUGAL PRIOR TO THE ABORTIVE NOV 25 COUP. DECISION TO RETIRE CAMOUFLAGE GARB IS SYMBOLIC STEP AWAY FROM CONCEPT OF "REVOLUTIONARY ARMY."

5. COMMENT: SCHEDULING OF ANGOLAN DISCUSSION IN RC IS SIGNIFICANT. AS SITUATION IN ANGOLA DETERIORATES FOR UNITA AND FNLA AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR MPLA INCREASES, PORTUGUESE ARE GETTING NERVOUS ABOUT BEING LEFT OUT ON A LIMB. ANTUNES, WHO HAS FAVORED MPLA RECOGNITION SINCE INDEPENDENCE ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD BE THE "PRAGMATIC AND REALISTIC" POLICY, NOW HAS INCREASING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HIS POSITION. NEVERTHELESS, AS ANTUNES HIMSELF ADMITS THE ISSUE WILL BE A HARD FOUGHT ONE. THERE IS PLENTY OF OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION AT ALL LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ARE FIRMLY AGAINST, AND THE PRESENCE OF 300,000 MOSTLY ANTI-MPLA RETURNEES WEIGHS HEAVILY IN THE POLITICAL BALANCE.
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